Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 00481 141559Z

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

SS-20 NSC-10 SPC-03 NEA-10 OCL-00 EUR-25 DRC-01 /098 W
---------- 095439
P R 141445Z JAN 74
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7246
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
CINCPAC
CINCEUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
AMCONSUL ASMARA

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 0481

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, IO, ET
SUBJECT: AIR SUPPORT FOR INDIAN OCEAN TASK GROUP
OPERATIONS:

REF: STATE 006069

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH FONMIN MINASSIE SAID THAT EMPEROR WOULD MAKE DECISION ON PROPOSAL CONTAINED REFTEL AND THAT I SHOULD DISCUSS MATTER WITH EMPEROR AFTER FONMIN HAD BRIEFED HIM ON SUBJECT, HIS PRELIMINARY REACTION WAS THAT PROPOSAL INVOLVES UNACCEPTABLE RISKS FOR IEG UNLESS USG CAN CONTRIBUTE MORE TO ETHIOPIA'S SECURITY.

2. ON MORNING JANUARY 14 I PRESENTED REFTEL PROPOSAL TO FONMIN MINASSIE, WHO RESPONDED PROMPTLY IN FRANK AND FRIENDLY FASHION. HE SAID THAT PROPOSAL WAS MATTER OF GREAT IMPORTANCE FOR IEG, THOUGH PERHAPS NOT FOR USG, AND THAT HE WOULD DISCUSS IT WITH EMPEROR, WITH WHOM I SHOULD THEN DISCUSS MATTER DIRECTLY. HIS OWN REACTION WAS THEREFORE ONLY A PRELIMINARY ONE BUT HE WISHED MAKE FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

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PAGE 02 ADDIS 00481 141559Z

3. DR. MINASSIE POINTED OUT THAT IEG HAD BEEN "VILIFIED" BY MANY COUNTRIES FOR MANY YEARS BECAUSE OF PRESENCE OF

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

KAGNEW STATION. NEVERTHELESS IT HAD NEVER RAISED OBJECTIONS
REGARDING KAGNEW NOR HAD IT SUGGESTED IN ANY WAY THAT IT
WISHED TO TERMINATE KAGNEW. ITS ATTITUDE HAD BEEN BASED
ON TACIT UNPTAFFING THAT THERE WAS A REAL CONNECTION
BETWEN KAGNEW AND U.S. PROTECTION FOR ETHIOPIA. THE IEG'S
ATTITUDE TODAY TOWARDS THE PROPOSED AIR SUPPORT FACILITIES
OR EVEN TOWARDS LARGER MILITARY INSTALLATIONS WOULD BE THE SAME
AS ITS PAST ATTITUDE TOWARDS KAGNEW IF ETHIOPIA'S SECURITY
WERE ADEQUATELY PROVIDED FOR. THAT IS NOT THE CASE AT
PRESENT, HOWEVER, TEH IEG HAS, FOR EXAMPLE, ONLY 80 SECOND-
RATE TANKS TO FACE A FAR MORE FORMIDABLE SOMALI TANK FORCE.

4. CONTINUING , DR. MINASSIE SAID THAT IEG HAS RECENTLY WON
CREDIT FROM MANY COUNTRIES BY BREAKING WITH ISRAEL. WITH
KAGNEW PHASING OUT AND IEG'S TIE TO ISRAEL BROKEN, IT IS
HARD FOR SOMALIA TO OBTAIN MUCH SUPPORT FOR AN AGGRESSIVE
POLICY TOWARDS ETHIOPIA. THIS SITUATION WOULD CHANGE
IMMDIATELY, HOWEVER, IF IEG AGREED TO PROPOSED AIR
SUPPORT FACILITY AT ASMARA. ACCUSATIONS WOULD BE MADE
THAT IEG WAS HELPING USG SPY ON ARAB STATES AND ON ACTIVITIES
OF SOVIET FLEET. THIS NEW SITUATION WOULD CREAT GREAT
DIFFICULTIES IN TERMS OF THE SOMALI THREAT, FOREIGN SUPPORT
FOR THE ELF, AND, LESS IMPORTANTLY, FOR IEG RELATIONS WITH
USSR. EVEN SO, REEMPHASIZED DR. MINASSIE, THE IEG WOULD
NOT HESITATE TO ACCEPT THE USG PROPOSAL IF ITS MILITARY
SECURITY WERE THEREBY ASSURED.

5. DR. MINASSIE CONCLUDED WITH A SMILE THAT HE FELT THE
IDEAS THUS FAR ADVANCED BY USG CONSTITUTED "ONLY HALF A
PROPOSAL", SINCE THEY DID NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF ETHIOPIA'S
SECURITY PROBLEM. HE WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO HEAR "THE
OTHER HALF OF THE PROPOSAL".

6. I THANKED DR. MINASSIE FOR HIS FRANKNESS, PROMISED
TRANSMIT HIS REACTION TO WASHINGTON, AND INDICATED I WOULD
SHORTLYREQUEST APPOINTMENT WITH EMPEROR.

7. COMMENT: DR. MINASSIE'S RESPONSE WAS PREDICTABLE AND
IT IS LIKELY THAT EMPEROR WILL TAKE SAME LINE.
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PAGE 03 ADDIS 00481 141559Z

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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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US Department of State
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